(b) if so, whether the hardliners in Pakistan have decided not to permit Prime Minister of India to visit Lahore; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government on such threat posed by hardliners in Pakistan?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government are aware that Pakistani extremist groups had adopted a negative attitude towards Prime Minister's visit to Lahore. Government hold that, contrary to the sentiments expressed and actions taken by these groups, the peoples of India and Pakistan desire the establishment of a relationship of peace, friendship and co-operation between the two countries. Government expect that the Prime Minister's historic initiative will mark a new chapter in our bilateral ties.

PM's Visit to Jamaica, Morocco and Trinidad and Tobago

998. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Prime Minister recently visited Jamaica, Morocco, Trinidad & Tobago and held talks with heads and leaders of those countries;

(b) if so, what are the details of his talks and outcome thereof; and

(c) whether any MoUs were signed between India and above mentioned countries, if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir. The Prime Minister Visited Trinidad & Tabago from February 8-9, 1999; Jamaica from February 9-12, 1999; and Morocco from February 13-14, 1999.

(b) and (c) *Trinidad and Tobago*

During his visit to Trinidad & Tobago, the Prime Minister held detailed discussions with President Arthur N R Robinson and Prime Minister Basdeo Pandey. Among the issues discussed were economic and technical cooperation in wide range of areas and strengthening of the close cultural links between the two countries. The Prime Minister also inaugurated the Low Cost Housing Support Centre in Port of Spain and laid the foundation stone of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Cultural Cooperation. The Institute is intended as a Centre for teaching of Indian dance, music and the Hindi language. A Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement was signed to provide a fresh impetus to the flow of Investment, technology, trade and services between the two countries. A Memorandum of Understanding on Low Cost Housing was signed.

Jamaica

The Prime Minister's visit to Jamaica was in the context of the Ninth G-15 Summit held at Montego Bay, Jamaica from 10-12 February 1999. The Summit deliberated extensively on issues of concern to developing countries. These included discussions on the current international economic situation, reaffirmation of the importance of a transparent, fair and equitable rules-based multilateral trading system under the WTO, reform of the international financial architecture, South-South and intra G-15 cooperation, and the prospects of undertaking a G-15—G-8 dialogue in these matters. All such priorities were duly reflected in the Joint Communique issued at the end of the Ninth Summit. In order to be able to cope with the challenges posed by globalisation and economic liberalisation and the ongoing financial crisis, members agreed to promote convergence of viewpoints on these issues. They also called for enhanced regional and international cooperation to combat the menace of terrorism. India's offer to host a G-15 meeting at an appropriate level in preparation for the third WTO Ministerial Meeting was welcomed by the participants. They also endorsed India's proposal for a 'strategic sectors' for South-South cooperation focussing on core areas like

bio-technology, information technology and infrastructure development.

Morocco

The Prime Minister held detailed discussions with King Hasan and Prime Minister Abderrahmane El Youssoufi of Morocco. Views were exchanged on important global and regional issues, and on ways and means to further expand and diversify bilateral cooperation. The Discussions revealed similarity of approach on most issues. Morocco also expressed understanding of our concerns. During the visit, a Bilateral Investment Protection Agreement, a Tourism Cooperation Agreement, and an Agreement between Press Trust of India (PTI) and Maghreb Arab Presse (MAP) for mutual professional cooperation, were signed.

Visit of Indian delegation to Beijing

999. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-items published in The Hindustan Times dated the 16th February, 1999 captioned "Tyrnaround in chinese attitude towards India."

(b) whether any Indian Delegation is likely to visit Beijing to discuss the normalisation process including the modalities of holding the meeting of Joint Working of Indo-China Group (11th Session) towards the end of this month, proposed to be held in China at the invitation of chinese Foreign Minister, and;

(c) if so, what is the reaction of Government to chinese invitation?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) Indian and China held Foreign Office consultations in Beijing on 25-26 February 1999. We have proposed that the Joint Working Group on the boundary question be convened at an early date.

Issue of Passports to the Applicants from Punjab

1000. SHRI KARTAR SINGH DUGGAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of passports issued to the applicants from Punjab during 1997-98 including those renewed;

(b) the countries where the Punjabis normally seek to go;

(c) the number of Punjabis who went abroad as tourists and those who emigrated permanently during 1997-98; and

(d) the number of Punjabi tourists who returned to India in 1997-98?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) Details of the number of passports issued and renewed by the applicants from Punjab are as follows:

Year	Passport Issued	Passport Renewed
1997	1,50,659	5,374
1998	1,62,490	4,112

(b) to (d) Punjabis visit almost all the countries. No country-wise record of Punjabis specifically going abroad as tourists, emigrating permanently, and returning to India, is maintained by the Government.

Opinion of G-15 Countries about India's Nuclear Test

1001. SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether G-15 Summit was recently held; if so, the details of outcome thereof;

(b) what has been the opinion of member countries about India's last year's nuclear blast; and